



Oxford Gardens Primary School Attendance Policy

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2020

Oxford Gardens Primary School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

- The national average for attendance in primary schools is currently 96%.
- At Oxford Gardens we are continuously working for our attendance to be at least in line with the national average of 96%.

Procedures if children are:

Absent

- On the first day of absence if there has been no contact by 9am from a Parent/Carer as to why their child is not at school, a member of the office staff will call home to find out why the child is absent and this will be noted in the register.
- If the member of the office team cannot get through to the main contact, they will try all of the alternative contacts listed. Once one of the contacts is reached, it is then their responsibility to find out where the child is.
- If none of the contacts can be reached, then a home visit will be instigated that day.
- If we are not able to locate the child, we will need to contact the police to complete a welfare check to ensure the child is safe.
- When a child returns to school after being absent, the Parent/Carer should explain the reason for the absence.
- If it is a long period of sickness (3 days or more) evidence should be provided. An appointment card, copy of a text message/email, a copy of a prescription or a doctor's note could also be used.
- If a child is persistently absent the procedures outlined in this policy will be followed.

Late

- School starts at 8.30am (Years 2-6) and 8.40am (Years N-1). Any child arriving at school after this time will be marked in the register as late.
- If children arrive after 8:50 they will need to go into the school office to sign in.
- If children are deemed to be persistently late then the parent/carer may be invited in to meet with the Head Teacher and the Pastoral Deputy Head Teacher.
- Persistent lateness is taken very seriously. If following the action above, punctuality remains an issue, then a referral can be made to the Early Help Team.

Child Missing Education

If a child stops attending school and no communication about the reason is given then the child will be referred to the Child Missing Education (CME) Team.

If a child is persistently absent:

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Review September 2022*

Where a school is concerned about the pattern of a child's attendance and punctuality, the school will follow the procedures set out below to enable early intervention:

- When a child's attendance drops below 90% (for the school year) a member of staff will ring the parent to alert them to this fact. They may be invited in for an informal meeting with the School Attendance Lead and a member of the Early Help team to set targets and discuss ways forward.
- If there is not a significant improvement, a parent contract will be set up with the Early Help practitioner and/or the Head Teacher and Pastoral Deputy Head Teacher to discuss any issues with attendance and set out a period of time to show improvements.
- If there is lack of parental co-operation or no improvements made, then the school will make a formal referral to The Early Help Team.
- In extreme cases, parents that do not engage with The Early Help Team may be prosecuted.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:

The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s)/carer(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Parents:

The law requires that children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a full time education. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to *“cause (the child) to receive full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he or she may have.”*

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know and bring the appointment card/or other evidence to the school office. Pupils should be brought back to school after appointments so that they miss as little school time as possible.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day at 8:30/8:40
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible and bring the child back to school following or before the appointment.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide up to date contact details.
- Provide an explanation of absence, including dates as soon as their child returns to school.
- If it is a long period of sickness (3 days or more) a medical letter should be provided.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.
- If a child leaves Oxford Gardens Primary School, provide details of the new school that they will attending.
- If a parent chooses to home educate their child, put this in writing and give it in to the school office. They will then be referred to the EHE Team.

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with the RBKC policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with RBKC policies and procedures.

Head Teacher and Pastoral Deputy Head:

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of data and respond to findings.
- To monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Early Help service and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

The class teacher will be responsible for:

- Marking the register accurately.
- Providing a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.
- Promptly logging any attendance concerns on the weekly PPG grid.
- Giving feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality at Parents Evenings.

The Senior Administrative Officer with responsibility for Attendance will be responsible for:

- Checking periodically to ensure registers are being entered correctly.
- Following up absences that are causing concern.
- Liaising with the Early Help Team.
- Making formal referrals to Early Help Team and completing the paperwork for Penalty Notices.
- Organising rewards for good attendance.
- Adding late marks and monitoring lateness weekly.

Members of the Office Team will:

- Make first day contact with parents and carers.
- Ensure that letters regarding lateness or questioning absence are sent out.
- Bring concerns to the Senior Administrative Officer, Head Teacher and Pastoral Deputy Head Teacher.

Early Help Team

Introduction

The Early Help Team works closely with schools and other agencies to promote encourage and enforce regular school attendance of children of compulsory school age who are residents in The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

By Law all children between the ages of 5- 16 years of age must receive an education. Once a child is registered at a school, it is the parent's legal duty under The Education Act 1996 to ensure that the child attends school regularly and punctually.

Whole school initiatives aimed at raising attendance in the school:

- Traveller scooter run.
- Scooter Scoop.
- Breakfast club open to all children.
- Tracking of children with attendance below 90%.
- Termly attendance celebration assembly. Including awards for most improved attendance.
- Attendance percentage shared with parents.

Procedures for Exceptional Leave

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Review September 2022*

The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.

Any absence during term time disrupts the continuity of a child's education and reduces their chances of success. Wherever possible, Parents/Carers are asked to take family holidays during the school holidays.

However, we appreciate that in some cases taking your child out from school during term time can be unavoidable. In these cases, it is the parents' responsibility to check with the school regarding the procedures for requesting a period of exceptional leave. It is advisable to apply for the leave giving as much notice as possible. Do not assume the Head Teacher will authorise exceptional leave requests. (No flights or bookings to be made in advance until authorisation is given from the Head Teacher).

Any unauthorised holidays taken will result in taking the risk that your child could lose their place at school and may be taken off role.

When deciding whether to allow term-time leave the Head Teacher will consider:

- the age of the child
- the reasons and circumstances provided by the parent
- the timing and duration of the leave
- the child's record of school attendance
- any previous term-time absences
- the child's level of academic progress
- the amount of notice given
- the time of year
- the effect on any tests or examinations
- the likely impact of the absence
- the cultural background of the child and whether extended family members live in another country

In requesting exceptional leave, parents are expected to complete an exceptional leave request form (available from the school office) and hand it back into the office staff at least **three weeks** in advance of the date requested.

The requests are shown to one of the Senior Admin Officers and advice taken from the Early Help Team, however the ultimate decision lies with the Head Teacher. The Parent/Carer is notified of the decision in writing.

Where absence is not authorised, the school will confirm this decision in writing advising that they will be at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996: "If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence." The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Home-School Agreement

There is a Home-School agreement in place, which addresses attendance and punctuality. Both parents, and the school are expected to sign this agreement on an annual basis.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in the light of new legislation/school developments.

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